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REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending. All claims were rejected.

Claims 1-9 and 22-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,870,495 to Mancuso *et al.* ("the Mancuso patent"). Claims 10-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Mancuso patent. Claims 16-21 were rejected as being apparatus versions of claims 1-15.

The present application is being amended to claim continuation-in-part status based on the application (08/584,529) that issued as the Mancuso patent. The two inventors of the present application, Massimo Mancuso and Rinaldo Poluzzi are inventors of the Mancuso patent. The present application was filed on May 29, 1998 while the 08/584,529 application was still pending. Accordingly, the present application properly is a continuation-in-part of the 08/584,529. As a result, the Mancuso patent is not prior art to the present application.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Massimo Mancuso and Rinaldo Poluzzi

SEED Intellectual Property Law Group PLLC

Robert Iannucci

Registration No. 33,514

RXI:asl

Enclosures:

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Check

Form PTO/SB/17 (+ copy)

Petition for an Extension of Time (+ 2 copies) (OPTIONAL)

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6300
Seattle, Washington 98104-7092

Phone: (206) 622-4900

Fax: (206) 682-6031

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